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ABSTRACT

Following a review of the literature on mature female students, this paper examines enrollment trends in a selection of colleges in Alberta (Canada) and presents the findings of a survey of returning women students at Red Deer College. The literature review highlights factors related to the personal and professional development of women graduates of baccalaureate programs returning to college, coping strategies among professional and non-professional women returning to school, the historical progress of women in higher education, women in student government, models of adult development, and the needs of returning women. After citing statistics illustrating an increase in the number and percentage of older students and women students at Alberta Colleges, the paper presents the questionnaire used to survey 40 women over 30 years of age attending Red Deer College, and percentage responses. Finally, recommendations for student recruitment, administrative improvements, support services, and faculty involvement are presented. (EJV)

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# ENTICING MATURE FEMALES INTO COLLEGE

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RED DEER COLLEGE
LEXIE LOSETH & LINDA MOREAU

# ENTICING MATURE FEMALES INTO COLLEGE

Because there appears to be a dramatic increase in the number of mature females returning to college, educational institutions need to look closely at this particular population if they are interested in retaining these students and attracting others. This paper will provide a review of the literature pertaining to mature female students, a look at developments in a selection of Alberta colleges regarding the number of mature female students, results from a survey conducted at Red Deer College, and recommendations to consider in meeting the needs of this special population.

## I. Literature Review

A. Speer and Dorfoman (1986) investigated factors related to personal and professional development in reentry women graduates of baccalaureate degree programs aged 35 and over. Personal development was defined as "perceived exansion of one's personal capabilities" and professional development was defined as "perceived expansion of one's professional or career capabilities."

Subjects included 109 reentry women graduates of eight liberal arts colleges in Iowa, the colleges representing all geographical regions of the state. A questionnaire was mailed to respondents. Independent variables of the study included educational background, number of years of work experience in the field of study prior to graduation, motivational factors in returning to college, support from the college, support from non-institutional sources, and rated level of satisfaction with choice of field of student. Dependent variables included respondents' ratings on a 100-point scale of perceived levels of personal and professional development after becoming reentry students.

These investigators found that number of years of work experience in the field of study prior to graduation was negatively related to level of personal development since reentry. Neither number of years out of school prior to reentry nor age when degree was completed were significantly related to either personal or professional development. Desire for a career identity was strongly related to both personal and professional development. Also significantly related to both personal and professional development were desire for a meaningful role, providing a positive role model for children and relief from boredom. Desire for achievement and job preparation were related only to professional development, whereas desire for intellectual stimulation was related only to personal development.

Rated helpfulness of career planning and placement and financial aid were significantly related to both personal and professional development, whereas helpfulness of academic advising and personal counselling were significantly related only to personal development. Reentry workshops and orientation programs, flexible scheduling and helpfulness of faculty members were not found to be related to either personal or professional development.

Significantly related to both personal and professional development were rated level of support from classmates, friends and employers, whereas support from family members was not correlated with either personal or professional development.

Rated level of satisfaction with choice of field of study was related to both personal and professional development.

Based on the findings of this study, investigators suggest that institutions place greater emphasis on career advising, planning and placement services. They also recommend more help with choice of major and assistance in general academic planning. Lastly, the formation of support groups of women who share the same situation and opportunities for intergenerational exchange were suggested.

B. Bertell and O'Hare (1987) examined the coping strategies and level of coping success in dealing with student-family and work-family conficts among professional and non-professional women returning to college.

Subjects included ninety-two women returning to college who were members of a support group for women of older than average age and who had at least one child, were married and living with their husbands. Two questionnaires (one for the wife and one for the husband) were mailed to each household. The wife's questionnaire included measures of role participation, student-family and work-family conflict, coping strategies, coping success, and demographic items, whereas the husband's questionnaire included several demographic items.

These researchers found that for professional women, employee-home maintenance roles and student-mother roles were the most frequently reported conflicts, whereas conflicts between student-home maintenance and student-mother roles were the most frequently reported conflicts among nonprofessional women. Findings also indicated that professional and nonprofessional women used different patterns for coping for different types of role conflicts, although the investigator notes that it may be that the way people cope with situations is characteristic to the individual and the extent to which a specific role conflict dictates the choice of a strategy versus a characteristic coping style is not presently known.

Based on their findings, Bertell and O'Hare suggest that orientation and counselling programs for returning female students might include discussion of life events and social support but should also include workshops and presentations on role conflicts and coping strategies.

C. Pitman (1986) summarized research conducted through observation, document review, a survey and life history interviews of reentry women participating in Midwestern University's Centre for Continuing Education. Pitman concluded that at one time continuing education programs met the needs of women who were not employed outside the home. However, women's lives have changed and many programs have not. She notes that the continuing education movement eliminated entrance

requirements, course requirements, most academic credits and graduation--milestones necessary to accomplish transitions adults experience in educational institutions.

D. Saslaw (1981) reviewed the historical progress of women in institutions for higher learning and also examined the special needs of the adult female student. As Saslaw points out in 1981, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that one-third of the college population was older than twenty-five, and two-thirds of these older students were women. Between 1974 and 1979 the number of women over thirty-five years increased by 66.8 percent. This figure coupled with the addition of another 58.7 percent in the twenty-five to thirty-five age group have made the female population very important to the continued growth and survival of many universities and colleges. In addition, the eighteen to twenty-one year age group will decrease by an estimated 33% by the end of the century, and thus the growing numbers of older students will become increasingly more significant.

However, dealing with the problems of the mature female student is a major factor in successfully replacing eighteen to twenty-one year old students with mature female students. As Saslaw points out, the need for special services and alternative programs are included in most articles and books dealing with reentry women. She concludes her article by summarizing these areas of special needs.

E. Scully (1986) reviewed the progress women have made in higher education and some of the inequalities that still presently exist. In Canada, Finland, France, and the U.S. women make up at least half of all the students and at least 40 percent of the enrollment in most other industrialized Western countries. In secondary schools, however, career choices still tend to follow a traditional pattern--girls choosing the arts and humanities and boys the sciences. Gender divisions are even more striking in vocationally oriented fields.

F. Bernstein and Shavlik (1986) interviewed four young women student government presidents who attended the second National Conference for Women Student Leaders and Women of Achievement. In the interviews these women discussed their lives, campus politics, their views about the women's movement, and their hopes for the future. These four women's divergent views are presented in this article.

G. Berlin (1986) reviewed three books, In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women in Higher Education in America by Barbara Solomon, Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges From Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings by Helen Horowit, and Women in College: Shaping New Feminine Identities by Merra Komarobsky. The first two books examine women in higher education from an historical perspective, whereas the last book investigates students' lives and attitudes in the 1979-1983 class at Barnard.

H. The article "Thousands of adult women entering Canadian universities" appearing in the October 23rd, 1987 issue of the Red Deer Advocate, reviewed the findings obtained by Roberta Way-Clark in her research project undertaken for a master of arts program from Dalhouse University in Halifax. In her thesis, Older Women Entering University: Overstressed and Underserved, Way-Clark found that adult women across Canada are returning to university in increasing numbers; the part-time enrollment of mature adults will increase 40 percent by the end of the century. Way-Clark also examined some of the stresses and problems facing mature reentry women.

I. Eliason (1981) reports that women need to become much more aware of all career options if they are to choose an appropriate program which will offer them higher economic benefits and academic equity. Women students tend to use what they know best rather than explore new possibilities so they often end up repeating behavioral patterns, thus limiting their alternatives.

Eliason also looks at serious financial barriers which are placed before adult women, particulary part-time students. Many women are blocked from financial assistance because they are required to list the spouse's income from the previous year even though they may have no access to those funds. Loan repayment requirements may be prohibitive, especially for single mothers.

Eliason sees counselling as the key to preparing females for the return to college. Counsellors should be redefining their roles to better serve the increasing numbers of adult learners. Faculty should also become more involved in offering support across the home, education, and work arenas.

According to Eliason, community colleges need to broaden their ideas in order to serve new populations. Some ideas she puts forward include opportunities for midmanagement training, paid internships, credit for life experience and home-making, increased access to entrepreneurial skill development, outreach programs, external degree programs, and equal access to men and women in non-traditional occupations. "Necessary elements for effective women's programming in the 1980s will include institutional commitment in terms of personnel, facilities, and finances; active community-based advisory committees; creative external financing; and multifacted programming addressing varying populations." p.40.

J. Evans (1985) discusses the development of women across the life span with an emphasis on an increased sense of changes in women's roles. Because of the birthrate declining, people postponing marriage, women living longer, the greater likelihood of divorce, and increasing number of women in the work force, women have experienced a tremendous increase in the number of options available to them. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, women are facing changing, varied and often contradictory role expectations. As a result, personal uncertainty and stress is increased.

Evans reviews three models of adult development: life stage, life events, and individual timing perspectives. The life stage perspective where change is thought to be initiated by an internal timetable and influenced only in a minor way by environmental events is based almost exclusively on the male experience and is not very appropriate for the study of women's development. In contrast, both the life events, perspectives and individual timing perspectives focus to a much greater extent on the variability of human life and environmental influences which affect behavior. Developmental events are not necessarily linked to specific ages.

Evans further investigates dimensions that greatly affect lives of women: family roles, career paths, interpersonal relationships, self-concept and well-being. All of these dimensions are so interrelated that a decision that a woman makes in an area greatly affects all the other areas. Planning becomes very difficult but also very critical.

According to Evans, those working in student affairs must be sensitive to differences among women and assist them in exploring and clarifying their own values. Younger women students will need information and support during their decision-making while older women will need assistance in adapting to transition in their lives. Since friendships outside of marriage are considered very important by women, the use of group experiences can be valuable in facilitating their development. Institutions themselves need to be more aware of the image they present. Strong role models are needed at all levels of the college environment.

K. Holliday (1985) states that the 1980s will bring a new challenge to colleges and universities--the challenge of meeting the needs of increasing numbers of adult women returning to educational institutions. These women can no longer be characterized as mainly middle-class, middle-income, middle-aged women with time on their hands. Reentry women now come from all income groups and can be single parents or head of households interested in serious educational pursuits. Their reasons for returning vary greatly from economic necessity, preparation for a new or different career, desire for increased status as a college graduate, divorce or death of a spouse to the need for intellectual fulfillment.

Holliday discusses the barriers that reentry women face in three categories: institutional, situational, and psychological. Institutional barriers include sex and age quotas, lack of financial aid, particularly for part-time students, admission policies regarding advance credit, stringent curriculum planning and course scheduling, inadequate support services such as childcare, and faculty and staff attitudes.

Situational barriers include social class, ethnic or racial group to which the student belongs, marital status, mobility, geographic location, and access to financial support.

Psychological barriers include management of time, family responsibilities, management of guilt related to multiple roles, anxiety about level of ability, lack of self-confidence, lack of support from family and friends.

Holliday concludes with some very specific recommendations to assist institutions in developing and strengthening support services for reentry women. These recommendations include methods of recruitment, admission policies, orientation programs, financial aid policies, preparation of professional staff and counselling suggestions.

L. Greenfeig and Goldberg (1984) report that although adulthood is often thought of as a time of stability, in fact it is a time filled with transitions. Many adults return to school during a time of transition in their personal or career life. Any transition creates stress; therefore, returning to college may create multiple stresses for the adult student. It is extremely important for those working with adult students to have knowledge of adult development and of the transitions that may occur in an adult's life.

According to the authors, the returning student is likely to be undertaking a renewed search for identity. They may be suffering from low confidence and self-esteem and be very unsure of their abilities. As well they are assuming an additional role in life which likely creates more stress.

Returning students may have unique needs that are different from the traditional student: childcare services, updating study skills, financial support for part-time study, career information, counselling and peer support groups.

Strengths of adult students include strong academic abilities, unique life experiences and strong motivation.

Because of a widely diverse population of returning adults, the authors recommend that multiple approaches to orientation be used, that interaction with other returning students be utilized, that students have easy access to information and support services, and that a returning adult student program be established as a coordinated effort staffed with professionals and trained peers.

Recruitment programs are recommended to let the adult know that the institution welcomes them. Open House and community outreach are two strategies that can be used. The authors also deal with what could be included in a pre-enrollment program that would meet the needs of adult learners.

In addition, Greenfeig and Goldberg suggest support services throughout the year including credit courses, workshops, peer counselling, individual counselling, informal social gatherings and returning adult student organizations.

Finally, the authors note that institutional involvement and support is essential when attracting and retaining adult students, including assessing the specific needs of students, revising policies and procedure to take into account the adult population, developing a public image appealing to adults, educating its own faculty and staff, and establishing a coordinating committee to connect all agencies on campus that work with adult students.

M. Lordi (1980) reports on four successful women's centers, dealing mainly with the objectives of the center, the funding and staffing arrangements, who participates, and the success of the center. A short description of issues facing returning women is included. The most beneficial sections of this article are the recommendations to student personnel professionals and the recommendations for women's centers.

## II. Percentage of Mature Females in Alberta Colleges

In the United States, the number of traditional college students began to decline in 1978 while the number of older students increased. Between 1974 and 1979 the number of women over 35 increased by 66.8% while the 25 to 35 age group of females increased by 58.7% (Saslaw, 1981). To determine if Alberta colleges were experiencing the same trend, statistics were gathered from several colleges to show the percentage of females of 30 years of age and over compared both to males of the same age group and the total college population. The following table illustrates the results:

| | Total Population September 1987 | % of Females 30 years + | % of Males 30 years + |
|---|---|---|---|
| Grande Prairie College | 1752 | 22.2 | 9.3 |
| Keyano College | 1307 | 23.5 | 15.8 |
| Lakeland College | 941 | 3.3 | 4.3 |
| Mount Royal College | 6149 | 14.5 | 6.8 |
| Red Deer College | 4267 | 19.8 | 6.8 |

Statistics were not gathered to enable a comparison of these figures with previous years.

## III. Study of a Sample of Mature Females at Red Deer College

Discovering that approximately twenty percent of Red Deer College's population is comprised of females of 30 years of age or older warranted conducting a questionnaire with a random sample of this population (forty students). The questionnaire and the results are reported here.

# QUESTIONNAIRE
## A PROFILE OF THE MATURE RETURNING FEMALE
## RED DEER COLLEGE 1987/88

TO BE COMPLETED BY RDC FEMALE STUDENTS OF AGE 30 YEARS OR OLDER.

**Directions:** **Complete questions 1 to 47 on the Scantron form. (No names please.)**
**Questions 48 to 50 are to be completed on this survey form.**
**Select only one response for questions 1 to 47.**
**Would you please answer questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 on this paper as well as on the Scantron form.**

1. Type of program registered in:

   a. CPP **12.5%**
   b. General Studies **17.5%**
   c. Certificate Program **17.5%**
   d. Diploma Program **40%**
   e. University Transfer **12.5%**

2. Age:

   a. 30-35 years **55%**
   b. 36-40 years **25%**
   c. 41-45 years **5%**
   d. 46-50 years **5%**
   e. 51 or over **10%**

3. Marital Status:

   a. married/common-law **50%**
   b. divorced/separated **45%**
   c. single **5%**
   d. widow **0%**

4. Number of Children:

   a. none **7.5%**
   b. 1-2 **47.5%**
   c. 3-4 **32.5%**
   d. more than 4 **12.5%**

5. Do you have children under 1 year old to 5 years?

   a. yes **17.5%**
   b. no **82.5%**

6. Do you have children aged 6 to 12 years?

   a. yes **52.5%**
   b. no **47.5%**

7. Do you have children aged 13 to 18 years?

   a. yes **50%**
   b. no **50%**

8. Do you have children over 18 years old?

   a. yes **27.5%**
   b. no **72.5%**

9. If you have children in your care, what are your present child care arrangements?

a. babysitter 15%
b. parents/older sibling 5%
c. daycare/nursery school 15%
d. in regular school 37.5%
e. child cares for self 17.5%

10. Indicate your year at Red Deer College:

a. 1st year 52.5%
b. 2nd year 30%
c. more than 2 years 17.5%

11. What was the highest grade you completed before coming to RDC?

a. grade XII 67.5%
b. grade XI 7.5%
c. grade X 17.5%
d. below grade X 7.5%

12. Have you ever attended a college before?

a. yes 37.5%
b. no 62.5%

13. Are you enrolled as:

a. part-time student 12.5%
b. full-time student 87.5%

14. Presently, how many hours a week are you employed outside the home?

a. none 65%
b. 1-10 hours 17.5%
c. 11-20 hours 7.5%
d. 21-30 hours 2.5%
e. more than 30 hours 5%

15. What has been your primary field of work prior to entering college?

a. secretarial/clerical 27.5%
b. child care/housewife 32.5%
c. waitress/store clerk 22.5%
d. beautician/cosmetics 0%
e. health/social services 12.5%

16. What is your present living situation?

a. live with parents/relatives/roommate(s) 2.5%
b. live with spouse/common-law 5%
c. live with spouse & children 45%
d. live with children 42.5%
e. live alone 2.5%

17. Through which of the following ways are you financing your education?

a. grant/scholarship/gov't sponsorship 30%
b. student loan 37.5%
c. full or part-time job 5%
d. family or husband 25%
e. savings 5%

18. Approximately how many hours per week do you spend on studying and assignments?

a. 1-5 hours **2.5%**
b. 6-10 hours **15%**
c. 11-15 hours **20%**
d. 16-20 hours **27.5%**
e. more than 20 hours **35%**

19. Please rate your overall involvement in the community activities.

a. high **15%**
b. moderate **25%**
c. low **40%**
d. no participation **17.5%**

20. Please rate your involvement in extra-curricular activities on campus?

a. high **0%**
b. moderate **5%**
c. low **30%**
d. no participation **62.5%**

21. What is your primary purpose for going to college?

a. to begin a first career **20%**
b. to change careers **20%**
c. for economical benefits of further education **32.5%**
d. for personal challenge/advancement/stimulation **27.5%**
e. to meet new people **0%**

22. What was your primary reason for choosing Red Deer College over other colleges?

a. offered the program I wanted **20%**
b. reasonable cost and facilities **2.5%**
c. close to home **72.5%**
d. reputation of instructors **0%**
e. size of college and classes **7.5%**

**By weighing (a) through (e) respond to each problem with school as it pertains to you. [(a) being the least difficult category and (e) being the most difficult rating.]**

| | | a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. | demands on time and energy | **0%** | **5%** | **25%** | **37.5%** | **32.5%** |
| 24. | financial concerns | **7.5%** | **25%** | **20%** | **20%** | **27.5%** |
| 25. | keeping up with family responsibilities | **2.5%** | **12.5%** | **22.5%** | **45%** | **17.5%** |
| 26. | keeping up with social life | **22.5%** | **7.5%** | **37.5%** | **15%** | **12.5%** |

| | | a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27. | keeping up with community responsibilities | 30% | 15% | 27.5% | 17.5% | 7.5% |
| 28. | feeling like you have the understanding/support/ of friends & family | 30% | 22.5% | 27.5% | 10% | 10% |
| 29. | marital stress because of college | 50% | 22.5% | 10% | 10% | 7.5% |
| 30. | making friends on campus | 55% | 20% | 22.5% | 2.5% | 0% |
| 31. | parking | 45% | 20% | 20% | 7.5% | 7.5% |
| 32. | finding time to study | 0% | 17.5% | 32.5% | 40% | 10% |
| 33. | finding adequate child care | 57.5% | 12.5% | 10% | 7.5% | 10% |
| 34. | speaking up in class | 45% | 25% | 20% | 5% | 5% |
| 35. | finding a quiet place to study | 22.5% | 25% | 22.5% | 15% | 15% |
| 36. | having adequate study skills (notetaking, outlining, etc.) | 22.5% | 30% | 25% | 12.5% | 10% |
| 37. | feeling like a stranger on campus | 42.5% | 25% | 25% | 7.5% | 0 |
| 38. | having adequate English skills for College | 70% | 12.5% | 12.5% | 2.5% | 2.5% |
| 39. | keeping calm while taking tests | 10% | 15% | 27.5% | 27.5% | 20% |
| 40. | maintaining motivation to continue College | 32.5% | 27.5% | 22.5% | 15% | 2.5% |
| 41. | deciding on occupational direction | 37.5% | 15% | 32.5% | 12.5% | 2.5% |
| 42. | ability to locate resources in College library | 55% | 22.5% | 22.5% | 0% | 0% |
| 43. | being able to approach instructors with problem | 52.5% | 22.5% | 12.5% | 12.5% | 0 |

| | | a | b | c | d | e |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44. | feeling as though College counsellors were accessible | 42.5% | 22.5% | 22.5% | 5% | 7.5% |
| 45. | getting through acceptance and registration procedures | 42.5% | 22.5% | 22.5% | 5% | 7.5% |
| 46. | being concerned about personal safety on campus | 87.5% | 7.5% | 0% | 5% | 0% |
| 47. | the fear of failure | 10% | 12.5% | 25% | 32.5% | 15% |

48. Indicate any other difficult problems you encountered upon entering or attending Red Deer College that were not mentioned above.

- Discriminated against because of age by instructors
- Counselling Department did not clearly outline requirements to enter program
- Commuting
- Not enough time to become involved in College activities
- Child care for special needs child
- Counselling Department information contradicted that of Nursing Department
- Making the decision to enter college in first place
- How to fit into class of much younger students without making myself or them uncomfortable
- Stress of family life (responsibility of ageing parent)
- Should be adult support services specifically to address needs of older students
- Extremely heavy course load
- Instructors lacking in teaching skills
- Day care facilities limited to 3 year olds so need to arrange transportation to other area
- Administration not helpful
- Courses do not always relate to career choice--wasting time and energy when there is none to waste
- Instructors forget there is life outside the college walls
- Financial strain

49. Indicate which services, programs or assistance at Red Deer College you have used:

Services:

| | |
|---|---|
| 2.5% | family housing |
| 5% | child care centre |
| 55% | counselling |
| 45% | learning assistance centre |
| 15% | peer tutoring |

| | |
|---|---|
| 30% | workshops (such as study habits, how to write exams, etc.) |
| 2.5% | services for the handicapped |
| 20% | financial aid |
| 0% | other Explain: _____ |

50. What other services, programs, or assistance that Red Deer College does not have would make your educational experience at the college more effective?

- Financial help for older married students
- Need a program about registering and about financial aid
- Bigger and better daycare
- More publicity re mature student group so those thinking of entering college could talk to these people
- Degree program so students don't need to leave area
- Offerings from Counselling Department on family affairs (ageing parents)
- More parking
- Better bus service
- Evening daycare and weekends, also sick care
- Better playgrounds for children
- Cable TV
- More assistance with help against an instructor who was negative in assisting and teaching
- Each counsellor should have some drop-in time daily
- Problems with transfer to other institutions could be improved by bringing counsellors in from transfer institutions

The sample is too small to make generalizations but the average mature female from this group would be a full time student enrolled in a diploma program in the 30-35 age range, married with one or two children. These children are likely age 6 to 12 years and are in elementary school. This student has completed Grade XII, has not attended college before and is in the first year of studies. This student lives with her spouse and children, does not work outside the home, and was previously a housewife. Her education is being financed by student loan. She spends more than 20 hours per week on studying and assignments, participates to a very limited degree in community activties, and does not participate in extra-curricular activities on campus. Her primary reason for attending Red Deer College is its proximity to her home and her primary reason for going to college is for the economic benefits of further education. The most difficult problem she encountered in returning to school, in order of priority, were demands on time and energy, keeping up with family responsibilities, finding time to study, fear of failure, keeping calm while taking tests, and financial concerns.

A more extensive study with an ensured high return would be needed before an accurate and complete profile would be possible. An ideal time to conduct this survey would be in late September or mid-October when the difficulties of reentering college are still fresh in the students' minds.

## IV. Recommendations

Considering the information from the literature review, the following recommendations should be considered if the educational institution is serious about attracting mature students and giving them every chance for success:

### A. Recruitment

1. Ensure that mature students are evident in brochures, college calendars and other advertising which promote college programs.

2. Arrange for local TV stations, radio and newspapers to do features on mature students who have been successful.

3. Arrange for graduates to visit local women's organizations to discuss their experiences and answer questions.

4. Have mature students in partnership with younger students man booths during Open House.

### B. Administration

1. Review college policies to ensure mature females are not being discriminated against by admissions policies.

2. Provide quality day care within college grounds or in close proximity.

3. Lobby government agencies to provide adequate funding for part-time and full-time mature students.

4. Ensure that the college offers an appropriate mixture of certificate, diploma, university transfer, and community education programs.

5. Encourage college departments to consider granting credit for life experiences, volunteer work, or experience other than college classes.

6. Provide opportunities for females to enter nontraditional careers.

7. Eliminate unnecessary obstacles in registration procedures.

8. Form a local coalition of community and service organizations in connection with financial aid to students.

9. Conduct research to determine the needs of all categories of students, including the mature student group and be prepared to act on the information.

10. Provide assistance with job placement.

11. Present an image to the public that women do contribute positively in all areas of the college, including upper administrative levels.

12. Ensure that at least some counsellors are knowledgeable in adult development.

C. **Support Services**

1. Establish a Learning Assistance Centre whose purpose would be to help all students improve basic skills in English, Math, Study Skills, etc.

2. Provide space for a mature student centre/lounge with a quiet social atmosphere. Perhaps fees could be earmarked for this rather than the usual athletic fee (Skelhorn, 1975).

3. Establish a peer tutoring system.

4. Establish a networking/support system on an informal basis (such as a buddy system which pairs a second year student with a first year).

5. Offer timely workshops through the counselling department or the LAC on time management, career planning, preparing term papers, etc.

6. Provide student handbooks for different age groups, with the mature student booklet emphasizing information on support services for mature students, appropriate financial aid, child care, information on community agencies.

7. Take workshops to other locations, such as church groups, day care facilties.

8. Have the counselling department or individual academic departments provide pre-enrollment orientations. Include spouses.

9. Have counselling department offer inservice programs for faculty on understanding adult development.

D. **Faculty**

1. Act as a mentor for mature students.

2. Take advantage of opportunities to learn new teaching styles that may be more conducive to the success of mature women (such as cooperative learning).

3. Help locate role models and mentors.

4. Locate faculty in male dominated fields who would assist in developing programs for women.

5. Try to provide students with greater opportunities for field work and internships.

6. Encourage mature females to assume important leadership roles, such as in student government.

7. Utilize life experiences of students in making course content more relevant.

8. Accept the fact that some mature women come to class with tremendous stress from trying to cope with so many roles.

9. Be prepared to offer assistance or recommend other groups who can assist mature students in upgrading forgotten skills.

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